



City of Champions

Linda M. Balzotti- Mayor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 15, 2010

Brockton After Dark adds volunteerism to agenda

Annual summer program teaches kids about giving back

BROCKTON – Mayor Linda M. Balzotti is happy to announce the start of a new component to Brockton After Dark, Champions for Change

“This is an unique initiative that shows young people that there are opportunities to give back to the communities, and lets them formulate their own plans of how to expand on those existing opportunities,” said Mayor Linda M. Balzotti. “I’m proud we can offer this chance for those young people to get involved in their community.”

“It’s very youth-lead,” said Patricia Godio, the program coordinator and Brockton’s Promise Fellow.

The volunteer and service program stems from the work of Brockton Promise’s Opportunities to Help program, of which the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts are a part. Representatives from the Girl Scouts work to facilitate each session.

“We know that empowering youth to make a difference in their community helps build their self esteem and ultimately keeps them engaged in the work of creating positive change in Brockton,” said Heather Arrighi, Brockton’s Promise Chairperson.

Launched in 2003, Brockton’s Promise is a community initiative of 70 local partners in the health, social services, non-profit, and faith based organizations. Together this coalition of dedicated individuals works to make a sustainable difference in the lives of youth in the city. The coalition’s priority is to ensure that all young people in Brockton graduate from high school and succeed in work and life.

Programs and services promise to provide the five assets of developmental resources that research shows is necessary for all young people to succeed. Those promises include A Caring Adults, Safe Places, A Healthy Start, An Effective Education, and Opportunities to Help Others. Brockton’s Promise was founded under the principles of America’s Promise Alliance.

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The Champions for Change program is offered Wednesday nights, from 6 to 10 p.m. at the War Memorial Building, 156 West Elm St., now through August 18.

Each session begins with an overview of an organization and their efforts in the community. The information session is followed by an ice cream sundae party, and then participants engage in a service planning period to find ways to participate in the agency's mission. At the following week's session, the group works on their projects.

"The goal of the program is to get young people thinking about their community," said Renee Pease, Community Program Specialist for the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts.

"It's getting them invested in the community, and to provide the resources for girls to make a difference in their community. Every little bit helps," she said. "Girl Scouts is much more than cookies, camping and crafts. While those activities will always be a part of what we do, we are trying to educate the community that we are building future women leaders. "

Now in its seventh year, Brockton After Dark is a free program for city youths ages 13 to 20. The program provides activities and programs to young people all summer long at various locations throughout the city.

For more information concerning Champions for Change, or Brockton After Dark, please contact Patricia Godio at (508) 897-6821. You can also obtain additional information by visiting the City of Brockton's website at www.brockton.ma.us.

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